

Washington, DC -- Today, U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) announced that the U.S. Department Justice has approved a \$200,000 grant to the City of Rome to reduce crime in target neighborhoods and promote neighborhood revitalization.

“As a former Oneida County District Attorney, I know first-hand how critical community building programs like Weed and Seed are to reducing crime and fostering development in our cities’ most vulnerable areas,” **said Arcuri, who spoke in support of federal funding for the Weed and Seed program on the floor of the House yesterday**. “The Weed and Seed program helps localities develop programs to weed out and deter crime and then take the all-important step – often left out – of planting seeds in the formerly high-crime areas with programs to promote neighborhood revitalization.”

The Rome Weed and Seed site received Official Recognition in June 2006. This grant is the site’s second award to implement its strategy. During the project period, law enforcement will identify and reduce drug incidents and drug-related crimes, and reduce the number if violent crimes committed in the designated area. Community policing goals will work to improve community relations. Prevention, intervention, and treatment goals include the creation of a safe haven, providing a variety of programs and services focusing on drug abuse, prevention, and other behavioral problems. Neighborhood restoration goals strive to restore the community by increasing homeownership opportunities and employment opportunities.

“Weed and Seed is a perfect example of residents and the community volunteering together to make our City a safer place to live, work and play”, **said Mayor James F. Brown**. “It is through the dedication of Coordinator Kathy Stockbridge and the community involvement that allows our City to move forward in a positive direction and ultimately improve our quality of life.”

“This funding will allow us to proactively attack our crime while seeding with preventative programming that will allow us to sustain the positive measures we are currently accomplishing,” **said Kathy Stockbridge, Weed and Seed Site Coordinator**. “Over the past year we have achieved great success with this program and we are grateful that we will be able to continue the positive work that has been carried out this far.”

Yesterday, as a member of the House Rules Committee, Arcuri led the debate on a resolution providing for consideration of the fiscal year 2008 Commerce, Justice and Science

Appropriations bill (H.R. 3093), which includes increased funding for the Justice Department's Weed and Seed program.

"It is an honor to be able to announce this grant for the City of Rome so soon after I spoke on the floor of the House in support of increased federal funding for the Weed and Seed program," **said Arcuri**

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The fiscal year 2008 Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations Bill (H.R. 3093) would provide \$50 million dollars, 52 percent more than current funding, for the Weed and Seed program. The funds will be used to sponsor activities such as truancy prevention, conflict resolution, mentoring, and job-training for at-risk youths in cities like Rome nationwide.

H.R. 3093 also includes \$725 million dollars for the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program, 25 percent above the current funding level. As well as, \$40 million dollars for grants, technical assistance, and training to state and local governments to develop dedicated drug courts that subject non-violent offenders to an integrated mix of treatment, drug testing, incentives, and sanctions.

H.R. 3093 is expected to pass the House of Representatives today.

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